



# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monthly News Release

OMAHA – Mountain snow accumulation continued to improve in April, but dry conditions persist across much of the Missouri River basin, resulting in a lawsuit by the state of South Dakota and the expectation of further reductions in river flows in July.

“April’s runoff above Sioux City was 1.8 million acre feet (MAF), only 60 percent of normal, despite improved amounts of snow in the mountains. In March, it was less than half of normal,” said Larry Cieslik, Chief of the Missouri River Basin Water Management Division in Omaha.

“The amount of snow in the mountains showed improvement again during April. The reach above Fort Peck peaked at 90 percent of normal on April 20. In the reach from Fort Peck to Garrison the snow is still accumulating and is currently 85 percent of the normal peak,” said Cieslik. On March 1, mountain snowpack was only about 80 percent of normal. It usually peaks near mid-April.

“Assuming normal rainfall for the rest of the year, we are forecasting runoff will be 18.5 MAF,” said Cieslik. Normal is 25.2 MAF.

System storage ended April at 48.2 MAF. Last year at this time it was 53.6 MAF. The amount of water in the reservoirs is more than 10 MAF lower than normal, putting the three largest main stem lakes 9-15 feet below normal.

Releases from Gavins Point averaged 23,200 cubic feet per second (cfs) during April, compared to a normal of 26,700 cfs. Because the reservoirs are low, flows are 4,000 cfs below full service. “Given our forecast, we expect a further reduction to minimum service flows in July,” said Cieslik. The season length should be the normal eight months, ending Dec. 1.

Lewis and Clark Lake will remain near 1206 feet above mean sea level (msl) during May.

Fort Randall releases averaged 20,200 cfs in April. They will range from 18,000 to 23,000 cfs in May as needed to maintain Lewis and Clark near its desired elevation. Lake Francis Case ended April at a record low elevation of 1352.1 feet msl. The lake is currently falling due to reduced flows through Big Bend from Oahe. These reduced flows are in response to a temporary restraining order issued by the U.S. District Court in South Dakota. A hearing on a temporary injunction will be heard on 9-10 May in Aberdeen.

Lake Oahe dropped two feet during April, ending the month at elevation 1596.2 feet msl. This is 11 feet below normal. The lake is 8 feet lower than last year at this time.

Garrison releases averaged 10,800 cfs during April, compared to a normal of 19,900 cfs. They will be increased to 20,000 cfs around mid-May and held at that rate during the summer. Lake Sakakawea ended April at 1827.5 feet msl. It will rise less than one foot in May, ending the month 9 feet below normal. The lake is 3 feet lower than last year at this time.

Fort Peck releases averaged 4,100 cfs during April, compared to a normal of 7,900 cfs. They will increase to 6,000 cfs around mid-May and then to the summer rate of 9,000 cfs. The lake ended the month at elevation 2218.8 feet msl. It will rise 1.5 feet during May, ending the month nearly 14 feet below normal. Last year at this time the lake was 4 feet higher.

The six main stem powerplants generated 556 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in April, 75 percent of normal. Given the forecasted inflow this year, energy production should be 7.3 billion kWh compared to a normal of 10.2 billion kWh.

**Daily and forecasted reservoir and river information is available on the water management section of the Northwestern Division homepage at [www.nwd.usace.army.mil](http://www.nwd.usace.army.mil).**

## MISSOURI RIVER MAIN STEM RESERVOIR DATA

	Pool Elevation (ft msl)		Water in Storage - 1,000 acre-feet		
	On Apr 30	Change in Apr	On Apr 30	% of 1967-2001 Average	Change in Apr
Fort Peck	2218.8	+0.3	12,074	80	+55
Garrison	1827.5	+0.6	15,245	85	+169
Oahe	1596.2	-2.0	15,576	81	-537
Big Bend	1420.1	-0.7	1,694	98	-42
Fort Randall	1352.1	+1.8	3,287	83	+143
Gavins Point	1206.2	-0.6	362	97	-16
			48,238	82	-228

## WATER RELEASES AND ENERGY GENERATION FOR APRIL

	Average Release in 1,000 cfs	Releases in 1,000 af	Generation in 1,000 MWh
Fort Peck	4.1	344	39
Garrison	10.8	642	86
Oahe	20.6	1227	176
Big Bend	20.1	1197	71
Fort Randall	20.2	1204	123
Gavins Point	23.2	1372	60
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